



A Harp in the Winds
Daniel Henderson



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A HARP
IN THE WINDS

A HARP IN THE WINDS

LYRICS FROM A GARDEN, AND
SONGS OF CITY, SEA, AND ROAD

BY

DANIEL HENDERSON

AUTHOR OF "LIFE'S MINSTREL," ETC.



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NO. 2

TO
THE MEMORY OF
AN EARLIER POET
MY FATHER

FOREWORD

THE opportunity to say "read this and that" in a book of poems, "I like it and you will," is always grateful because enthusiasms grow by being shared. No such service is necessary for those poems of Daniel Henderson's which are made from the history of this continent. Their appeal is direct, their wording is felicitous, their popularity sure. They belong to the rapidly growing literature of the pioneer.

Yet it seems to me that Daniel Henderson's chief merit as a poet is more elusive. With him the power of what may be called emotional observation has been developed to a high degree. Like the seventeenth century lyricists of rural England, he sees by phrases singularly beautiful and full of sense. Instead of vague terms, the very thing which lifts the heart—arbutus, egret, hibiscus, or snow-trail—comes into the poetry. "The Stranger" is a rich and glowing instance of this. So are his Caribbean lyrics, and even suburban New Jersey gets a rare fervour which a million stolid folk will never know she deserves.

It takes all kinds of poems to make a book, and there is variety enough here to please many tastes in poetry. Yet it would be a pity if the happy lines of "Andrew Marvell" or the strength reserved of "Springtime Along the Pennsylvania Railroad" should be neglected. When he seems most delicate Henderson is at his strongest. Readers of this book should tune their perceptions for rich overtones.

HENRY S. CANBY

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LYRICS FROM A GARDEN

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE POET OF GARDENS
(For the Tercentennial Year of Andrew Marvell)

MARVELL, still your fragrant rhyme
Prosper on the bough of time!

Far beyond Nunappleton
Have your lovely lyrics run:
Backward to Theocritus,
Forward to the hearts of us!

Walk this new world, splendid ghost!
Watch Manhattan's surging host!
Would you dream our hearts are closes
For your tulips and your roses?
That your lilies and rosemary
Give our souls a sanctuary?
That the bird of silver wing
Nests in our remembering?

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Time will dull us; life will harden!

But our thoughts shall keep your garden

Green as when you taught a maid

Latin verses in its shade!

Green as when its wall shut out

Roundhead brawl and royal rout!

Green as when there came to birth

Milton's heaven, Marvell's earth!

Poet, see your sylvan view

Fresh with an eternal dew!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE STRANGER

I HEDGE rebellious grasses in,
But when shall ownership begin?

The spider spins her silver bars
Between me and the cosmos' stars,

And ere I waken is astir
To write revolt in gossamer!

With beady and foreboding eye
The turtle peers as I go by:

The shell that shuts him in is stout—
Stronger the code that shuts me out!

What dauntless and primeval stock
Makes yonder stone its council-rock?

What old, indomitable breed
Takes this low bush for Runnymede?

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Races whose titles run from God

Dispute my warrant to the sod!

I am Intrusion! I am Danger!

Familiar, but for aye—the Stranger!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

REPENTANCE

COME, mad March!
Do you repent

Tempers so incontinent

Vented on each darling bud

That dared to lift through mist and mud

To see you wavering in the hold—

Of spring's warm arms and winter's cold?

Yea, wild month—

It must be so!

For see—the last fierce swirl of snow

That was the symbol of your wrath,

Has melted by the garden path,

And bathes the jonquils' shivering spears

In a very flood of tears!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
S T. S W I T H I N

“**B**URY me,” the bishop said,
“Close to my geranium bed;

Lay me near my gentle birch.

It is lonely in the church,

And its vaults are damp and chill!

Noble men sleep there, but still

House me in the friendly grass!

Let the linnets sing my mass!”

Dying Swithin had his whim,

And the green sod covered him.

Then what holy celebrations

And what rapturous adorations,

Joy no worldly pen may paint—

Swithin had been made a saint!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Yet the monks forgot that he
Craved for blossom, bird, and bee,
And, communing round his tomb,
Vowed its narrow earthen room
Was unworthy one whose star
Blazed in Peter's calendar.
"Who," they asked, "when we are gone
Will protect this sacred lawn?
What if time's irreverent gust
Should disperse his holy dust?"
Troubled by a blackbird's whistle,
Vexed by an invading thistle,
They resolved to move his bones
To the chaste cathedral stones.

But the clouds grew black and thick
When they lifted spade and pick,

A HARP IN THE WINDS

And they feared that they had blundered
By the way it poured and thundered.

Quoth the abbot: "Thus, I deem,
Swithin shows us we blaspheme!
He was fond of wind and rain;
Let him in their clasp remain!"

Forty days the heavens wept,
But St. Swithin smiled and slept.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
OCTOBER GARDEN

MY garden feels the touch of fall
And, like a damsel, winter dreading,
She spins herself a damasked shawl
With red and gold and purple threading.
The cosmos breaks in starry bloom
Upon the robe of her designing;
Chrysanthemums from her rich loom
Are warmly her deep bosom twining.

October beats against her heart
And blusters he will be her master!
Defiantly she bends her art
To weave perfection in an aster!
Yet well the queenly maid must know,
For all the splendor she may pattern,
November's fierce, relentless blow
Will show her to the world a slattern!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
NIGHT PICTURE

AN oak rose up in the fields of night
And wove its branches into a snare.

The stars escaped in a high, swift flight—

But the moon hung prisoned there!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
AFTER THE STORM

(A Lilt for a Child)

THE fountains of heaven have poured
down their rain

And purged lawn and roadway of rubbish and
stain!

The sunbeams go searching the woods and the
green,

But even the toads and the earth-worms are clean!

The little white clouds lifted high, lifted high,

Are Mother World's petticoats hung up to dry!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SNOW FANTASY

THE wraiths of buds that formed to fade:
Viburnum's and hydrangea's ghosts,
Spiræa's fantom, lily's shade,
Lilac's and dogwood's spectral hosts,
Return to barren lawns and walks:—
Their bloom across the garden storms!
And now the wistful boughs and stalks
Are clustered with their lovely forms!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SNOW TRAILS

NOW I know what lay concealed
Under summer's blossomy shield!
Now I tell what furtive things
Night was folding in her wings!
Creatures near, yet shy and foreign,
I may trace to tree and warren!
Life that hid from man and hound
Here impalpably is bound!
Now I see how many a brood
Houses in my solitude!
Here I watch the changeless law
Whost testaments are fang and claw:
Yea, how timid brutes repeat
The tragedy of drink and meat—
Beasts that forage for their young
While on their trail lean death gives tongue!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
MELTING BROOK

WILD things that stole at dawn to drink
Saw nothing save the stream's white
chain,

And heard along the fettered brink
No note of urgency or strain.

Content it seemed to be a glass
Unmelted by the flame of spring—
Unthrilled if in its mirror pass
The splendor of a bluebird's wing.

But now dusk-shielded beasts shall creep
Where liberation roars and swells,
And lap where rebel torrents heap
Their sundered silver manacles.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
MINSTREL WIND

WHERE the pines and hemlocks grow
Minstrel Wind brought out his bow
And made each trembling bough a string
For lilts and madrigals of spring!

He blent into his souging strain
The patter and drip of April rain!
He told how a rivulet would slip
Away from stubborn winter's grip!
How he would give dead leaves a whirl
And find the arbutus' pink and pearl!
He prophesied the lyric gush
Of wren and cardinal and thrush!
He mocked a bee swarm buzzing forth,
The clang of wild geese wedging north,
The croak of toads on a lily-pond's edge,
A humming-bird awhir in the hedge!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

He sang a song of farmers sowing,
Of green grass growing! O, green grass growing!
And I, who listened in mist and mud,
Tripped along with my heart in bud.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

LOVE OF TREES

SELL—and wander on! The long dispute is
ended:

We will break new ground—yet how may I go
faring

When April brings the bloom to the slim young
trees I tended,

That I in dreams these winters through saw
blossoming and bearing?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
WINTER HAZE

WEAVE, wintertide, your purple fantasy!
Does autumn wither? Lend her bier
a cloak!

All things that blazed in her swift pageantry
Give now the consummation of your smoke!
Curtain the conflagration of the oak;
Veil sumac's torch: above death's scenery
Spread azure magic, that we may evoke
An April world from gray reality!

With blue bewitchments, O enchant our eyes!
Show violet's and harebell's windy hosts,
And royal iris, by blue pools upspringing!
And where bare branches song-forsaken rise
Bring back shy birds to flit like sapphire ghosts,
Till hyacinthine April wakes their singing.

CARIBBEAN COASTS
AND OTHER SEA POEMS

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SEA MIST

THE sea assumes her most mysterious
dress,

And vainly homing ships her films explore

For castled ports upon familiar shore,

Lost now, Atlantis-like, beyond all guess.

Hearken the eerier bugles of distress

That wail across a wilderness of hoar

Where mighty squadrons have become no more

Than phantoms on a tide of nothingness.

It is as if the unconquerable sea,

Weary of ships, and weary of man's boast

That he had tamed her tide and chained her

coast

And bound her tempests to his sovereignty,

Bade Mist, her frailest servitor, efface

The ramparts and armadas of his race.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
TO A SEA - GULL

BEGONE, bright ocean hoverer,
Who lured the first Phœnician oar
And showed the Norse discoverer
The shrouded Iceland shore!

Where now do virgin forests spring?
Where now may Darien be found,
That thus your keen impetuous wing
Allures me from accustomed ground?

Where now are mariners' rewards?
Where now do Montezumean spires
Lift to proclaim the yellow hoards
That sate a conqueror's desires?

A HARP IN THE WINDS

In what lost, unimagined clime

Lie coasts unchristened and unclaimed?

I am as one born out of time—

For all the world is tamed!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE CAPTIVE OF IGOR

IT drifts from lip to lip in the wilds of Russia—
A folk-lore straw on the winds of years—
That once Prince Igor, the well-beloved,
Sailed forth to plunder Persia.

The loot he seized—
The damasked shawls and jeweled headbands,
The jade and pearls and rubies,
He gave to his men.
Nothing he kept but the Rose of Persia—
Nothing he gloated on
Save his captive princess.

But Igor's men gazed too
On the frightened maid . . .
Then Igor read the thirst in their eyes!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Then Igor ran and lifted his treasure,

The little maid,

The snared bird beating against his heart!

Out from the prow of the ship he flung her—

Out to the hungry, sucking waters!

Over the snarl of his pack he thundered:

“See, Mother Volga,

Thus I yield you

The princess who severs the friendship of men!”

A HARP IN THE WINDS
A CARIBBEAN COURTSHIP

BEYOND the steamer fades San Juan
And Porto Rico's gray-green highland:
Where buccaneers have reigned and gone
The freight ship seeks St. Thomas island.
A gawky craft on glamorous seas—
Her treasures homely crates and cases!
Yet glorious in the midst of these
The skipper's daughter flaunts her graces!
Too young is she to know love's fires
Yet in her eyes the dawn is leaping!
And Joe, the Spanish mate, desires
To have her mad heart in his keeping!

The silent captain takes the wheel;
The sunset floods the sea with roses;
The amber twilight turns to steel;
About the ship the darkness closes;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

The phosphorescence wakes and trails

Across the deep its ghostly finger—

Beyond the singing forward sails

The mate and maid, romancing, linger!

The skipper scans the stars outspread,

And watches cloud and wind and water,

And probes the dusky leagues ahead—

Yet ever his eye is on his daughter!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
A SAN JUAN IMPRESSION

THE Stars and Stripes droop—
Homesick for an English word!

The ghost of the banner of Spain

Gloats beside our flag!

Spain's invisible sceptre

Rules these shores!

Her speech runs from lip to lip in the street,

And dwells proudly on the tongue of the Dor!

The diva drops soft Spanish airs into the hearts of
the throng!

How alien we seem!

Guns or gold can win a land,

But what can conquer its tongue?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE SCOURGED

(Song of the Port of St. Thomas)

HERE in my palace a sorcerer builded—
Draining the rainbow for colors to
paint it—

Bathing his bricks in the gold of the sunshine—

I dream of lovers who came and departed!

I was the Rahab who sheltered the Spaniard!

I was the Circe who called to the English!

I was the warm dark mate of the Norseman—

Luring alike the Malay and Frenchman!

God sent his prophets

To warn and to scourge me!

God raised His cross where my lovers built
bowers!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

God spoke in cyclones and fire and rebellion!

Yet through them all I have clung to my
crimson—

Sackcloth and ashes are not for the tropics!

Here I sit masking my age and awaiting
The arms of the future!

Once—how the sails flocked like doves to my
beaches!

When will my new love answer my singing?

When will his keel break the blue of my harbor?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
ST. CROIX SKETCHES

I. MOONLIGHT *

The night wind is ridden by witches!
The moonbeams are arrows of sickness!
Old man, stay inside!
Old woman, bar your windows
And shut every chink against the moon!

Black girl,
Witches are out,
And the moon is a plague!
Why does the closed door fret you?

Softly now—lest they waken!
Unbar the door lightly!
Dart across the silver road
And leap past the palm trees!

* Old people among the natives of St. Croix have a superstition that plagues are brought by moonlight and night breezes.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

There is a call from the woods
Stronger than the warnings of your elders!
There is a place among the mangroves
Where the wind cannot find you
Nor the moonlight touch you!

Scold, old woman!
When you were young
Did the moon or the night-wind
Hold you back from your lover?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
ST. CROIX SKETCHES

II. SUGAR

I could make a song concerning the peace of St.
Croix—

I could sing of an island drenched in the sun's
gold and lapped by blue waters!

I could picture lordly palms and emerald hills and
white beaches under soothing turquoise skies!

I could pretend that the fire of the hibiscus is the
only flame that runs across the sugar estates!

I could sing that the sun pours an opiate into the
hearts of the natives!

I could tell how in the silver twilight there is
music and mating!

But I cannot make a song concerning the peace
of St. Croix—

Because peace does not live among the men in the
canefields!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Because I see Marines and machine guns!

Because I know the thought of the cane-cutter:

“Fire is the black man’s friend!

Fire is as strong as an army!

One match can burn a *centrale*!”

And because peace does not dwell in the heart of

the planter’s wife

As she looks on her three young daughters asleep

like lilies in the moonlight!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
ST. CROIX SKETCHES

III. THE MELTED

In Christiansted

I met an old woman,

Homesick for Denmark.

She had sailed from Copenhagen

To her son Axel,

Who had gone forth years ago

To seek his fortune on the Spanish Main,

And had found it in the canefields.

She had meant to surprise him.

But instead, he surprised her—

With his native wife!

And his dark children!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
ST. CROIX SKETCHES

IV. HARBOR ATTACK

Our boat crawled into the harbor at midnight,
Too late for us to land.

I sprawled myself on deck,
Sniffing the shore's strange smells,
Eager for the sights of morning.
Bare feet pattered about the deck;
The sails swished and dropped;
The lanterns of the sky
Swung down to our bare masts;
A hush came.

Suddenly the deck swarmed with ghosts,
And a voice, hoarse and human,
Clamored for the skipper.
I thought of Blackbeard and Bluebeard;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Of how they and their ribald crews

Had once leaped out from these islands

To ravish merchantmen.

Had the buccaneers returned?

The cries became clear :

“Any mail for the United States ship *Vixen*?”

American sailors !

Avid for letters from home !

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SHIPBOARD POEMS

I. RADIO MESSAGE

UPON the floor the sprinkled meal
Invites the dancers' trot and reel,
While deck-lights—yellow, crimson, green—
Shut out the round moon's golden sheen.
The steward grinds the phonograph;
The couples bump—the wall-flowers laugh.
Then, where the revelers twine and whirl,
A tall man turns from a wondering girl
And trembles—is it fear or hope—
Before a radio envelope!

The sea's a hundred leagues around,
But searching Fate her goal has found!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SHIPBOARD POEMS

II. SAN SALVADOR *

We, a thousand miles from home—
Our swift keel churning the blue to foam—
With eyes that hunger for the shore
Sight gray-green San Salvador,
Sprawling on the cobalt deep
Like leviathan asleep!

Have we tired of lovely seas,
Who sail known tides in guarded ease?
If the sudden island stirs
Today's luxurious voyagers,
Columbus, then how deep your thrill
To see this ocean-girdled hill!

* First land seen by Columbus, 1492.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SHIPBOARD POEMS

III. OFF HATTERAS

“Off Hatteras—fog,” the logbook read.
Never a word the skipper said
Of how our ship, a night and day,
Crept up a ceremented way;
Of how as we went groping, peering,
Calling, listening, sounding, fearing,
There came from that wet wall, close by,
A long, shrill, terrifying cry;
Of how our whistle blew its breath
In the mysterious face of death,
Who went by, masked in his gray cloud,
And left us living in our shroud!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE SUNKEN CITY

(Port Royal, Jamaica)

THE hot shore sleeps; the moon-blanch'd
sea

Is tranquil at this midnight time.

A sentry walks in mystery,

Hearing a temple's pleading chime

Yet wondering what Carib fane

Sends forth this melancholy strain.

And are they fancies of moonfire—

Those pale, vague ships before him drifting,

As if the port of their desire

Lies where the mournful notes are lifting?

Ah sentry, let the dead past tell

The mystery of bark and bell!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Let the hushed century disclose

How here a city built of treasure

From pillaged galleons arose

Where corsairs came their spoils to measure

And bid their brown Delilahs hear

A tale to shock a demon's ear!

Pirates who yet, from crimsoned gold

Made offerings to Christ and Mary

That—when their deviltries were old—

The sweet bell of a sanctuary

Might tell of a celestial port

For shriven rascals of their sort.

Who dared, beneath the temple's notes,

To wreathe dark women with white pearls

Torn from the alabaster throats

Of piteous, pleading, broken girls

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Whose prayers they cursed, though Lord God
heard,

Speaking at last his awful word.

Let the hushed century unfold

How ocean cooled the burning lips,
And washed the crimson from the gold,
And plundered all the plundering ships,
Transforming palaces and taverns
To deep, clean, ferny caverns,

Where she who twined a young corsair

With jeweled arms, entwines him still,
And shields him with her weedy hair
From sharks that long since had their fill,
While over them the sad bell tolls
Its supplication for their souls.

LYRICS

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE WINDBELL

YOUR hands have hung a windbell where
The thirsting windows drink the air,
And when the curtains blow and crinkle,
I hear its tinkle, tinkle, tinkle!

Mine is a soul that dwells content
Within the clamorous Occident,
But when, by wandering breezes blown,
The windbell wafts its Orient tone,
Its song is as a bark which plies
Between blue seas and lilac skies;
And by this ship of sound I drift
To islands where chrysanthemums lift
In ranks of gold and purple plumes
To shelter silken, scented rooms
Whose crimson lamps at dusk shall dance
To light the traveler to romance.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

But ah, it would not be Cathay
With you, my heart's red rose, away!
So into this enchanted court
Your lovely presence I transport!
And sweeter than the samisen,
Or tunes that geishas sing to men,
Or windbell's rune, or temple's gong,
Or nightingale's delirious song,
Are these our murmurs which attest
A love that knows not East or West!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

JUBAL

CHARACTERS OF THE POEM :

Jabal: *the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.*

Tubal-cain: *an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.*

Jubal: *the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.* —Genesis 4:20-22.

SPOKE the Voice of Creation:
“Jabal shall keep the herds!

He shall be lord of the reaping

And warden of beasts and birds!

“Tubal shall mine the metals

Undergirding the grass!

He shall upbuild My temples

And bring the cities to pass!

“Jabal shall rule the meadows;

Tubal shall plant the town!

Yet I foresee them toiling

With body and soul weighed down!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

“Sick of the country’s silence!

Tired of traffic and throng!

So, for their strength and solace,

Jubal shall lift his song!”

Forth went Jubal, the minstrel,

Making his timbrel’s tune

Like to a well in the desert;

Like to a tree at noon!

Building out of the Babel;

Over its woe and care,

Up to the calm of heaven,

Tone’s ethereal stair!

Forth went Jubal, the dreamer,

Soothing the pain of Saul!

Sounding a march for Cæsar!

Pealing the chimes of Gaul!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Hark! Whose heartening music

Stills our turbulent street?

Who goes over the pastures

To sing to the thresh of wheat?

Who but wandering Jubal,

Come to us out of the old!

Lifting our spirits, shackled

By herds and houses and gold!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SONG FOR THE SENSES

S OULS by loveliness are fed,
And the stars become their bread!
Hearts are nurtured and updrawn
By the sunset and the dawn,
By a birch above a brook,
By a comradeship or book!
And the spirit leaps its closes,
Comprehending moons and roses,
Through the senses, which take toll
Of all beauty for the soul!

So, though never a bard essays
Ode or sonnet in their praise,
I this lyric praise shall bring
These who set my songs awing;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

These who make my pulses one
With the bough and bird and sun!
Yea, though hermits build defences!
Yea, though friars flog the senses,
I shall hold them priests and be
Minstrel to their ministry!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
AN ARTIST COMES TO A
CITY

THE temple of beauty is shut, and cold its
altar lies.

The mart roars on, like surf on a desolate shore !

A youth has come ; with brave, enkindled eyes

He lifts his torch to the dark, unyielding door.

A youth awaits ; but the kindly priests have gone—

The fretting crowd sweeps by the moldering
fane ;

And he who lit his torch in the fire of dawn

Bears into the dusk his star, nor comes again !

A HARP IN THE WINDS
HOMECOMING

WHEN I have walked through wastes of
night—

Through deeps unkindled by a star—
And turned at last where amber light
Leaps past your window bar;

My heart, by this beclouded sphere,
And by these blinded heavens, learns
How staunchly, how past reckoning dear
Love's constellation burns!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
LOVE'S LEGEND

LOVE writes no ending to his fragrant book!
What tho the page shuts on Francesco's
bliss?

Or on the flame that was Semiramis?
On Guinevere, who all for love forsook?
On Highland Mary, trysting by her brook?
On Dante's yearning? Or on Juliet's kiss?
Romance inscribes such glowing tales as this
In lives today, wherever one may look!

Love writes no ending! Dear, your heart and
mine

Blend in a scroll which for a time too brief
Trembles and burns beneath the legend's
glory!

Obscure, we yet descend from Helen's line,
And all who greatly loved live in our leaf,
Rekindling their sweet ardors in our story!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
TENEMENT CHILDREN

EAGLETS have no bounds or bars
Save the cordon of the stars;

Only searching beagles know
Where the little foxes go;

Little fish have leave to glide
With the world-engirdling tide;

Man bids lovely childhood bloom
In this pestilential gloom!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE MAN IN ME

DIMLY my surface self has known
That it is but the frame and mask
For one who on an inner throne
Compels my body to his task;
For one who takes for lordly dress
The trappings of my consciousness,
And—all impalpable—has bent
My spirit to his government!

Forever I have sought to touch
This monarch castled from my clutch;
This sovereign who derives his power
From kings within a deeper tower:
I probe the dungeons of my moods
But ever, ever he eludes

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Retreating through some misty gate
My strength may never penetrate—
The master mocks his questioning tool!
The emperor will not greet his fool!

In some unfathomable hall—
A wraith within this fleshly wall—
He holds dominion; takes control
Of my insurgent thew and soul,
Thwarting my day-planned, rebel leap
By judgments in the courts of sleep,
Mighty to mold me to his scheme
By the frail sceptre of a dream!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
PRAYER FOR THE RIGHT
VOCATION

LORD GOD, give him who loves the sea
A ship's uncertain destiny!

Give town men, who for fields entreat,
The benediction of the wheat!

Give merchant souls the haggling throng!
Grant to the poet, kept from song

By the loud commerce of bazaars
A lone path under sun and stars

To where a whispering forest stream
Shall summon from his heart its dream!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SPRINGTIME ALONG THE
PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

SPRING reveled in Virginia,
And then, with lavish hand,
Threw hyacinths and lilies
To eager Maryland.
In Delaware she lingered,
Then, buttoning her kersey,
How timidly, how timidly,
She tiptoed through New Jersey!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

KEATS

How astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its natural beauties upon us!—JOHN KEATS.

WHEN he drew near to the door of death,
How green the grass grew by his
road!

How sweet the honeysuckle's breath!

How fair the brooks of Hampstead flowed!

When he went out from life's brief way,

How liberal was earth's caress—

As if she lavished to repay

What he had wrought of loveliness!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
FRIENDSHIP

NO foe could strike this blow—
Could draw this blood, this tear!

By the deep wound I know

A friend was here.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
PROMETHEUS IN JERSEY

THE early winter dusk comes down
With chilling rain and whimpering
gust,

And this that was a friendly town

Is changed to shadows and distrust.

What, though, behind the pines and oaks

Wait hearts and hearths that conquer gloom?

The trees within their misty cloaks

Seem graybeards prophesying doom!

Yet suddenly a yellow light

Goes dancing through the drip and haze

As if a star had left its height

To free these night-beleaguered ways!

And see how many a golden lamp

From windows lost in dusk and dream

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Sends forth across the murk and damp

Its answer to the rallying gleam!

Say not: "Prometheus is bound!"

But ask this youth of Tuscan name

Who bears his torch upon its round

From what far sun he stole his flame!

For though no god in him you mark

He is of Titan blood no less

Who hurls against the hostile dark

A thousand spears of friendliness!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

WHEN I went up to Nazareth—
A pilgrim of the spring—

When I went up to Nazareth

The earth was blossoming!

I saw the blue flower of the flax

Beside a shepherd's fold!

Along the hillsides' stony tracks

I found the marigold!

The iris raised a shimmering spire

Of beauty at my feet!

The poppy was a cup of fire

Among the cooling wheat!

When I went up to Nazareth

I marked how time came down

With blighting dust and withering breath

Upon the hallowed town!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

The years that buried Babylon
Were drifting to efface
The steps of Mary's Heavenly Son,
His dwelling and his race!
But still I read his permanence
By signs that never dim;
With all their ancient eloquence
The lilies spoke of Him!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE WHITE EGRET

WHEN I pierced the marshland, bronzed
reeds blew asunder.

There I saw a green grove; there I paused in
wonder

Where a snowy egret ethereally stood
Like a seraph-sentinel before a sacred wood!

What though I had come with awe and reverence
and rapture?

What though but in soul I sought its loveliness to
capture?

Still it trembled; still it soared as if it saw arise
Esau of the red hands stalking yet through Para-
dise!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
DALLIANCE

HE will fare beyond the sun
When his earthliness is done!

He will dwell upon the rim
Of singing, flame-winged seraphim!
He will have no punishment
Except his scourging discontent
That to Lord God he must lift up
A self-wrought, shallow, stinted cup—
Because in this embattled world
He kept his noblest banner furled!
Because, with one last fort to seize
He loitered in the House of Ease!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE YOUNG MEN TO THE
OLD

WE will harken to the old
While they hold the forward vision!

While their councillors unfold

Splendid aim and grand decision!

But when years and faith divorce

We will blaze our own high course!

We will hold in awe the past,

But it shall not be our halter!

Where the future's gage is cast

We will meet the dare, nor falter!

Age, if you would lead us, then—

Climb with us to Darien!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

A TEST FOR POETS

A BOOK is not the sole sign of Song's
flower,

Nor fame the touchstone of the poet's art:

Judge bards, renowned or nameless, by their
power

To leave a measure singing in your heart!

The lowliest minstrel wins his bay if he

Can chum with Shakespeare in your memory!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE ALIEN

ALIEN, speak!
What do you seek—
Reign of law or revolution?
Torch and knife,
Lust and strife—
Are these your plan of evolution?
Are you “scum”?
Do you come
Curses at our ideals flinging?
Tell what lies
In your smoldering eyes;
Alien, what are you bringing?
Nay, I mask
No devil’s task!
Ask your Pilgrim blood what drew me!
Ask your sire

A HARP IN THE WINDS

How freedom's fire
Flamed for him—and beckoned to me!
Chained in tongue?
Custom strung?
Prey to wild-mouthed agitation?
Then give schools
And hopes and tools
For my emancipation!
Russ, Swede, Pole?
Nay, a soul!
Will you succor or forsake me?
Clay am I
Beneath your sky—
Come, what will you make me?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
GENERATIONS

THE warrior died that war might pass:
His child—in the unthinking mass
That cheers the haggard troops' returning,
Watches with spirit thrilled and burning,
Reading within the bayonets' dance
The world-old falsehood of romance:
Thus war perpetuates its power
And drops quick seed from its spent flower!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE SCULPTOR

(A chaplain speaks)

DAVID lies here—who turned our thoughts
away

From death by molding harlequins from clay!

David—whose slim, white fingers used to wrench

A seraph from the foul slime of the trench!

David—whose quick, creative soul could plan

A sepulchre to house Justinian!

We buried his great gift in this mud pall—

His shaft: a rude slab from a shattered wall!

God help us strive that into war's abyss

No more shall nations pour such blood as this!

And yet—he said that he would rather be

An atom in the shaft of liberty

Than hailed a Michael Angelo tomorrow. . . .

Perhaps we wrong such souls by too much sorrow!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
A SOLDIER LISTENS TO
THE NIGHT WIND

ABOVE him clouds like bright Valkyries
soar.

Beneath his window what were priestly trees
Are changed to bannered, battling companies
That droop and rally on a moon-blanced floor.
The gulf of night is torn by wail and roar,
And earth is as a battle-harp whose keys
Yield to fierce scalds those harsh, sweet melo-
dies
That lead men forth whence they return no more.

The Bersek wind has these wild bugles blown!
No ghost with moonbeams glinting on his mail
Rides back with tidings of the warriors' trail!
No trumpeter wakes now the martial tone!
And yet he quivers with his shaken wall
Hearing his comrades, trenchward marching,
call!

MANHATTAN PORTRAITS

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE BUSINESS CHANGES
HANDS

THE business changes hands; accountants
come

To scrutinize the books and search the files.
Disturbing rumors through the office hum;
Mysterious, keen-eyed men stroll down the
aisles.

Department heads, whose places are in doubt,
Pursue their duties with unworried faces.
As if to say that if they are let out
They know where they can go to better places.

But Billingslea, a plodding under-clerk,
Wonders if he is slated for discharge,
And pales before the spectre Out of Work,
And tries to make his occupation large.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Night falls; desks close; his comrades homeward
fare;

He stays and toils in bribery to fate,
Hoping approving glances come from where
His god writes down: "Your pay will terminate—"

A HARP IN THE WINDS

LACKAWANNA FERRY

JENKINS is used to spending his days
With bills and drafts and an adding machine;

Used to humdrum office ways
And traffic's dull routine.

Jenkins is faithful to his work—

Plodding along with Jack and Jerry:
Yet, what awakes in the dried old clerk
As his home road leads to the ferry?

See him over the ferry's rail
Drinking the glamour of tides and shores;
Noting each far, faint, homing sail;
Heeding the chants of the stevedores;
Measuring liners at their slips;
Feeling the engine's throb and quiver;
Watching the immigrant-laden ships
And Liberty, guarding the river!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Clearly he sees the ports they seek,

Steamers and schooners fading away—

Sydney, Shanghai, Mozambique,

Malta, Lisbon or Bombay!

Ports enchanted! Yet at home

Scenes as fair is he espying:

Look! Where currents tumble and foam

He sees the great fleet lying!

Jenkins is one with destiny—

Crumpled notes and canceled checks!

Jenkins has tamed his love for the sea,

For wind-beat, wave-washed decks!

Yet come times when he sheds the dull;

When his ferry road to Rangoon reaches!

When his spirit soars like a swift-winged gull

To skim the uttermost beaches!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE COMMUTER

THE milkman's clink;
The shuffling shoes
Of him who brings
The morning news;
A robin's twitter
From the lawn;
The baby prattling
To the dawn;
A neighbor's bantam
Fiercely crowing;
The first commuter
Trainward going;
The splash of bath
And shaving's clatter;
The welcome stir
Of wheat-cake batter;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Then, blending with

Our noisy mood,

The hoarse fog-horn

Of Maplewood;

A dash down-stairs,

A breakfast flurry;

The 8:12 tooting:

“Hurry! Hurry!” . . .

Such sharps and flats

Bring in the day

For those who live

Out Orange way!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

JESSICA

IN a Subway car I saw
Star-eyed, dusky Jessica.

She who with Lorenzo mated

I beheld, reincarnated—

Riding homeward with her beau

From a Broadway movie show!

Long ago, when Shylock sought her—

(“O my ducats! O my daughter!”)

She could vanish with her lover

In some friendly forest cover

Where a rapturous nightingale

Lilted to Lorenzo’s tale.

Now a tungsten lamp she’s under,

Guardsmen bawl, and coaches thunder,

And prosaic people stare

As her sweetheart breathes his prayer!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Heigh-ho! Something chokes the light!

In the sudden, welcome night

Heads and lips are close together . . .

Need a person wonder whether,

In old moonlit gardens, she

Found a fuller ecstasy?

Or if then Lorenzo's kiss

Was a sweeter one than this?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
LOVE IN A CROWD

THE eyes of men upon them beat
As in a jostling throng they meet.

Yet though the circumstance is such

That only by their gaze they touch,

They still may build within a glance

A sanctuary for romance!

Their looks such sweet enchantments fling

That, sundered thus, they kiss and cling!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
SUNSET THROUGH AN
OFFICE WINDOW

THE homing sun sends warning shafts
To bid men lay aside their crafts

And follow where he gilds a way

Beyond their world a workaday.

Yet still they toil; so he, in pity

For folk so cumbered by the city,

Pours splendour through the murky glass

And brings a miracle to pass.

The dimming rooms are drenched with gold;

The typist's hair is aureoled;

The clerk who drones the day's accounts

Thumbs golden columns and amounts;

The ledgers all with fire are tipped;

The toiler in his dusty crypt

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Intent on traffic's dull epistles

Beholds them changed to burnished missals

Such as, in medieval cell,

A patient monk illumined well.

Yet who in all this room's expanse

Spins dreams from this irradiance,

Or ponders what celestial dress

Has fallen on his weariness?

MIRTH

A HARP IN THE WINDS
MANHATTAN LIONS

*(Addressed to the stone lions at the entrance to the
New York Public Library)*

ROUSE beasts and roar your lettered
ancestry!

Wake, jungle lords, from your majestic trance
And show to skeptics your significance!
Dante in Hades did a lion see,
And Judah's lion lives through history,
Fair Una tamed a lion by her glance,
Androcles' beast stalks ever through romance—
Do you exalt that splendid company?

Or do you stand for souls we lionize—

Those who with poem, credo, book, or drama

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Pass in applauded, dazzling panorama
To be forgotten by the next sunrise—
Whose fame and works, on many an unthumbed
card,
In many an unread book, you nobly guard?

A HARP IN THE WINDS
MEDITATION ON DANTE

BEATRICE, forever young,
Dwells song-crowned in Dante's heaven.

Donna Gemma is unsung—

Though she bore the poet seven!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
ON CERTAIN CRITICS IN
THE POETRY SOCIETY

HUNTER and huntress, here they sit
With spears of satire, shafts of wit,
And barbs of learning, to impale
A sparrow or a nightingale.

What if some fledging songster's trust
Is shattered by their scintillant thrust?

What though the seasoned warblers, wary,
Shun this song-hallowed sanctuary?
These care not—gloating on the birds
That flutter in their snare of words!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE PRESS CLIPPING GIRL

LOOK, Jess—I like this poet's face!
I found it in a book review.
He's on my list for clippings, but
His notices are few.
You can't get editors to give
As much attention to a rhymers
As they allot to Tarkington,
Or Hughes, or Hergesheimer!
See—here's a thing a column long!
Smith wrote it: he's a good reviewer!
Just listen: "In these sordid times
Our major poets have grown fewer;
Yet this bard's singing raises him
To Helicon's muse-shelt'ring height!"
I've never heard of Helicon—
And yet it sounds all right!



A HARP IN THE WINDS

Hey, Bobby! Get an envelope

And send this clipping on its way!

(I hope it makes up for the roast

I had to send him yesterday!)



A HARP IN THE WINDS
ADDRESS, SOTTO VOCE, TO
A FUR-CLOAKED WOMAN

I SEE you undulate in fur!

Felinity blent with the human

You glide beside your worshipper

A lovely panther—yet a woman!

What though an eon wrought your grace?

I yet shall call it culture's bungle

That you, perfection of the race,

Go swaddled in the jungle!

AMERICAN TRAILS

A HARP IN THE WINDS

PRELUDE

M IDIANITE, Midianite,
What have you to sell?
“Figs and spice and Joseph’s son,
Found in a well!”

Tyrian, Tyrian,
Whither turns your keel?
“I have indigo and gems
To trade for brass and meal!”

Roman, Roman,
Why your far-flung legions?
“Cæsar covets purple silks
Wrought beyond his regions!”

Cabot, Cortez,
Why this western way?
“We would be the first to sift
The treasures of Cathay!”

A HARP IN THE WINDS

American, the world is tracked—

Shall the quest be staid?

“Know you not that Wisdom rides

On the wheels of Trade?”

A HARP IN THE WINDS
LEIF ERICSON OPENS THE
PATH TO AMERICA

(A.D. 1000)

*S*PIRIT of Columbus, tell:
Ere the western way you took
In your tossing caravel
Found you not an Iceland book?
Was not there the record traced
Of a Hesperidian shore?
Was not your high courage based
On the Norse who went before?
Were not your green laurels won
In the wake of Ericson?

Hark, the tribal warnings run:
"Sail not westward, Ericson!
There the storm lord's hissing wrath
Leaps to bar the Viking's path!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Southward turn; King Olaf's sail
Cleaves for you a treasure trail!
Southward seek for crowns and pearls
And Normandy's rebellious girls!
See, the west mist drinks the sun!
Yonder lies:—oblivion!"

Still upon the Greenland shore
Voices summon to explore.
While the old men hug their fires,
Stormward Ericson aspires.
Mocking, dauntless, forth Leif sails
Where the sun's last ember pales.
Lashed by many a tempest-whip
Triumphs his frail serpent-ship!
Empire's first faint western star
Dips to kiss his quivering spar

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Who, lost, bewildered, ventures on
Till from gray seas blue hills dawn!

Now lips tantalized by brine
Drink the juices of the vine!
On fair slopes, with ebon lustre,
Hangs the wild grape's luscious cluster!
Here comes slowly winter's blight!
Here is equal day and night!
"Vinland!" * cried the Men of Ships,
Fading into time's eclipse;
"Vinland!" was Leif's christening—
Were the ages listening?
Who now quickens to the fire
Of that ancient Iceland lyre
That gloried in a world hard won
By lion-souled Leif Ericson?

* Cape Cod.

A HARP IN THE WINDS
PILGRIM MOTHERS

(1620)

*(The first baptismal names entered in the records
of the church founded by the Pilgrims at Boston
were those that appear in these verses.)*

PILGRIM mothers—when your ship
Clove the wilderness of the West!

When the sea-wind's icy grip

Chilled the dream within your breast!

What of peril? What of woe?

What of pain and pestilence

Made you name your children so—

“Pity,” “Joy,” and “Recompense”?

When your unaccustomed hands

Helped to break the stubborn ground,

When your titles to the lands

Were a headstone and a mound;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Whence your calm, submissive mood,
 'Midst the new world's turbulence,
That you named your infant brood—
 "Pity," "Joy," and "Recompense"?

Pilgrim mothers—still the years
 Hang their misty goals in space!
We in turn are pioneers
 To an onward-surging race!
You who by the barren rock
 Built the spirit's excellence,
Make us worthy of your flock—
 "Pity," "Joy," and "Recompense"!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
DANIEL BOONE

(1760)

“**Y**OU dare not cross the Cumberlands!” the
voices said to him.

“You may not walk where bluegrass lifts beyond
the mountain’s rim!

No white man’s foot may follow the bear and
buffalo—

The red men guard the ranges!” But Boone re-
plied: “I go!”

“Ours are the teeming game-trails!” the Shawnee
chiefs defied;

“The spirits of our fathers rule the plains whereon
they died!

We know the way of white men—where their
explorers pass

Tomorrow shall their hunters rise like legions of
the grass!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

“You shall not track our forests! And where
your roof is found

Our tribes will make the fruitful place a dark and
bloody ground!”

Yet past the watching Wyandot, the vengeful
Cherokee,

A shadow through the wilderness, Boone marked
our destiny!

The faint trail through the mountains became an
open road,

With Boone to cleave the forests, and ease the
settler’s load!

With Boone to conquer famine, and turn the red
hordes back!

With Boone’s staunch buckskin rangers to shield
the fort and shack!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

The men who build the town forget the men who
led the way!

The glory of the first-to-go is as a vanished day!
But yet an urge is in our blood, a will defying
fear—

The nation's soul inherits still from Boone the
pioneer!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE "HALF-MOON" AND
THE "CLERMONT"

(1807)

THE ghost of Henry Hudson looks down
from his *Half-Moon*

At anchor in some phantom-port, some heaven-
clasped lagoon;

Looks down, a shadowy sentinel of that hill-
guarded stream

Which once had lured him on and on, yet baffled
his vast dream;

Looks down and marks upon the tides he searched
but to forsake,

How many bright-winged galleons had ventured
in his wake;

Looks down on teeming wharves and towns; on
meadows where the plow

Repeats upon the yellow loam the cleaving of his
prow;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Yet sees upon the foaming tide what rouses him
to wrath—

A lumbering, puffing, blunted boat defiles the
Half-Moon's path

And drives expectant fishermen from their accus-
tomed ground

Before the churning paddle-wheels, the steam-
pipe's horrid sound;

Affrighted as the Indians were when, gazing out
to sea,

They first beheld the *Half-Moon* rise on wings
of mystery!

The ghost of Henry Hudson, the spirit of the
past,

Beholds the Future striking down the lovely sail
and mast;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Beholds and deems adventure dead, and mourns
the old romance,
Nor sees beneath the clouding smoke an eager race
advance !

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE STAGE COACH

(1800)

FROM Baltimore to Wheeling a man may
go by stage—

An egg-shaped, swinging coach that makes a
scrambling pilgrimage!

A painted, circus-like affair that flames with red
and yellow—

Far grander than the enchanted coach that carried
Cinderella!

A coach that one with surety may trust himself
upon—

Does it not bear, in golden words, the name
“George Washington”?

Fresh horses wait twelve miles apart along the
road to Wheeling

But what makes fresh the passenger, who journeys
sore and reeling?

A HARP IN THE WINDS

O he who takes the western way through wilder-
ness and tide,

Must needs be stout of mind and soul, must needs
be tough of hide

For robbers wait, and redskins too, and wild beasts
have a way

Of stealing down the stage coach trail in quest of
human prey!

Yet off we dash, whatever chance, to thread a
score of towns

Where people wait us by the clock in homespun
shirts and gowns;

A pause to give these news-starved folk our East-
ern yarns and tattle,

A stop to eat and drink and stretch—then off
again we rattle.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Gaunt Westover, who holds the reins, and dares
his mates compete,

Sits like a ramrod, six feet tall, upon the driver's
seat—

A coachman noted far and wide for speed and
recklessness,

And now we're up, and now we're down, was ever
such distress?

But yet a cozy inn awaits, where each may fill
his cavern

With ham and chicken, washed with wine; while
through the shaking tavern

The slaves perform the hoe-down with shuffling
sole and heel,

And buxom maids are swift to leap to trip it in
a reel!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE FIRST STEAMBOAT
ON THE MISSISSIPPI

(1811)

STEAM shall rule Ohio's tides!"
Nicholas Roosevelt * decides.

Hark, its bargemen are astir:—

"Heed our warning, Easterner!

Here the hidden snag and shoal

Lurks to bar you from your goal!

Hudson River gave a scope

To achieve the *Clermont's* hope;

Here Ohio's sandbars shift;

Here ten thousand dangers lift!

Steam may rule the Eastern zone—

Here—let well enough alone!"

* Ancestor of Theodore Roosevelt.

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Nicholas calls them "Noah's neighbors!"

Nicholas pursues his labors!

"To the very Gulf we glide,"

Sing his engines to the tide,

"Where an inland stream may flow

There a paddle-wheel may go!

Ships are shuttles, we will spin

Till all cities are akin!

Rise to hail a busier scene,

Pittsburgh, Memphis, Muscatine!

Every lake and every river

Shall be blest by Steam, the Giver!"

See the curious people standing

At each Mississippi landing!

See the daunted Indian flee

From this whooping enemy!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

See each snag and sandbank rounded,
And the flatboat men confounded!
Hear the folk of Louisville
Roused by whistles strange and shrill;
That, however harsh they seem,
Have a world call for their theme!
Mark New Orleans wake to bless
Nicholas Roosevelt's success!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE COVERED WAGON

(1849)

*Oh then, Susannah,
Don't you cry for me!
I'm going to Californiah
With my wash-pan on my knee!*

“**I**T'S April, and the grass is up! Push out
across the plain

By Omaha to Laramie, till Oregon we gain!”

The settlers shout; the wagons drift along the
hazy trails

Like ships that lift on emerald seas their bright
ballooning sails.

Before the patient oxen the keen outriders race,
While lank lads prod the lagging herds to keep the
wagons' pace;

Penned to the prairie-schooners' sides the fluttered
chickens cluck,

A HARP IN THE WINDS

While children, peeping out, rejoice to share in
wanderers' luck,

But mothers, gaunt and weary, with infants at
the breast,

Pray God this be no fading dream of fortune and
of rest!

The bones of pioneers who trudged to see their
rich hopes fail

Shall gleam from desert and from peak to mark
the unwon trail!

The dark, rebellious tides that brawl where they
must cross the Snake,

Sing warning of the human toll unpitying currents
take!

The Blackfeet and the Shoshones, the Bannacks
and the Crows

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Have massed against this thin white line of stern,
determined foes,

Yet glamour gilds the far, faint path, and ruthless
Indian bands,

And all the venom'd perils of these unconquered
lands

Shall unavailing rise between the wanderers and
their goal,

Because in the unfaltering train there moves a
nation's soul!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE PONY EXPRESS

(1860)

***T**HE pony express! The pony express!
Thundering hooves of the wilderness
Linking the east to the farthestmost
Delver for gold on the nugget coast!*

Strength of steed and spirit of man,
Twice a thousand miles shall you span!
Valley of fire and mountain of snow,
Neither shall daunt you—the mail must go!
Couriers, speed till your cyclone fury
Links Pacific with Missouri!
Let the human lariat run
Under the stars, under the sun,
Past the traps the Indians lay,
Down the trails where bandits prey,

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Through the choking desert lands,
Through the sucking river sands,
Up the bald, defiant steeps
Where grizzly hunts and the cougar leaps,
Till you clamber the purple crest
Of the final tower of the challenging West;
Till Sacramento and Frisco sing
The saga of man's conquering!

*Thundering horsemen, gallop anew!
Beat on our hearts your swift tattoo!*

Search us! Rouse us! Are we loath
To dream new dreams? Then, out of our sloth,
Out of the ruin we call success,
Rally us! Rally us! Pony Express!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE COMING OF THE
RAILROAD

(1828)

THE legions of Napoleon march conquer-
ing from France!

Midst palms and snow the nations know the
Corsican's advance!

But what of Monsieur Cugnot? What hissing
steed rides he

That dares to challenge and affright the Emperor's
cavalry?

Because he scares the people with puffing, screech-
ing cars,

They thrust the reckless rider behind a prison's
bars,

Yet when at last the flags of France in dire defeat
are furled,

The soul of Monsieur Cugnot goes forth to win
the world!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

A Wellington! A Nelson! What victories are
theirs!

Yet Trevithick, the tinker, for grander fields pre-
pares!

Above the war-drum's rally, the pæan of the
horn,

Resound his steam-coach whistles from Plymouth
to Cambourne!

Among the mad postillions, amidst the frantic
horses,

In very truth a conqueror, the proud inventor
courses!

A toll-gate lifts to bar the road: "What toll do
you desire?"

The tollman trembles at the steed of smoke and
steam and fire!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

“Oh, please, dear devil, do drive on!” the driver
hears him say,

“The horse of Satan, noble sir, need not a penny
pay!”

America has heard the news, and not to be out-
done,

She clamors for a horseless coach from good
George Stephenson!

Behold, his locomotive comes with dour Scotch
engine-men—

Who drive the steed of steam across the State of
William Penn!

And though the people fear at first the track will
lead to Zion,

They clamber on the “America” and on the
“Stourbridge Lion”!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Give Britishers due glory; cheer to our native
sons,

For now in South Carolina a Yankee engine
runs!

'Tis kith to "English Rocket" and kin to "Wylem
Dilly,"

A clattering twin brother to English "Puffing
Billy"!

Hail too her daring passengers, who turn from
steeds to power

And ride the Charleston roadway at twenty miles
an hour;

But weep for its bold engineer—the safety valve
he ties

And blows the locomotive up to steam across the
skies!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

'Mid hardships and 'mid peril men laid their nets
of steel—

Strong webs that wove the divers States into a
commonweal!

Like Titans hurling spears they pierced with steel
the mountain's breast,

And planted steadfast bridges above the tide's
unrest,

Till cities bartered with the farms and with the
teeming ranges,

And summoned giant Steam to bear the stuffs of
their exchanges!

From Yukon to Floridian shores, by ancient In-
dian trails,

Ten thousand gleaming cities rose along the link-
ing rails,

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Till now from out the nation's heart to her re-
motest brood

By throbbing arteries leaps forth the pulse of
brotherhood!

A HARP IN THE WINDS
THE MOTOR AGE

“TIME to stir! Time to stir!”
T *Sings the sleek six-cylinder!*

“Leave your door and explore!

Quit your land and expand!

State to state, sea to sea,

Live in motor Romany!

Time to flit! Time to flit—

Step on it!”

“Not for us! Not for us,”

Purrs the motor omnibus,

“Are the locomotive’s rails,

Or the trolley’s hampered trails!

Give us freight! Watch our gait!

Any load, any road,

Any fare, anywhere

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Will be good enough for us!"

Sings the "omni" motor-bus!

The haughty Roman senator who rode the Appian
Way;

The Briton whose scythed chariot went mowing
to the fray;

The slaves who carved the pyramids from out the
Turah quarry

And bent their backs beneath the lash with but a
log for lorry;

The Canterbury pilgrims who gave old Chaucer
glee;

The highwayman who rode at last to fill the
gallows-tree;

The friar with his pardons; the minstrel with his
ditty;

A HARP IN THE WINDS

The ardent-eyed Crusaders who stormed the Holy
City;

The dromedaries tinkling across the Libyan sands;
The elephants that haul the teak in tangled jungle
lands;

The reindeer of the Norsemen; the riders of the
plain;

The dog-sleds of Kamchatka; the faltering slave-
train;

All men who laid the highways; all beasts who
bore the load

Shall see their strength upgathered; shall mark
upon the road

The burdens of the nations—however high they
tower—

Borne with the fleetness of the wind by Man's
new genie, Power!

A HARP IN THE WINDS

And Progress shall her shuttle ply in far-flung
filaments

Until the lost, lone villages of sullen continents
Shall waken to the motor's hail, shall see their
idols reel

Before the mud-bespattered god who curses at
the wheel!

The summits of the Rockies; Sierra's towering
height

That broke the first brave caravans and mocked a
nation's might,

Shall watch Invention's chariot rise up from the
abyss,

Unfaltering at the sheerest reach, the deepest
precipice,

A HARP IN THE WINDS

Until about the loftiest peak a silver path lies
curled—

The gyve that binds the hill-god to the service of
the world!

“I am the end!” the climbing coach goes singing
its creation,

“In me the spirit of mankind achieves its consum-
mation!”

Yet as it gloats a shadow floats between it and the
sun:—

A man-bird soars; his motor sings: “Our work
is but begun!

When you have scaled the steepest crest, does not
Aldebaran

Send down across the void of dusk its challenges
to man?

A HARP IN THE WINDS

When we have made the stars our floor and
spanned the firmament,

Then Progress may lie down to rest, and mankind
be content !”

(1)

THE END

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